4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

worn is black. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relations in the village shave their heads three days after a death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool in the road outside the village and his head is shaved by an old woman. For three days after the death of anyone of importance the villagers do not cultivate.

If a big chief dies all the surrounding people collect at the village; even if a neighbouring clan is at war hostilities are suspended, and they attend the funeral rites of their late enemy. In the case of the death of a chief a new hut is built and the deceased is buried inside in a sitting posture; the grave is dug by a brother of the deceased. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown are put into the grave; sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink *tembe* for ten days and many oxen are slaughtered. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for about a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

Birth customs.—On the occasion of a birth, if it is a boy it is kept inside the house for four days, if it is a girl for three days. When a birth takes place the female neighbours attend, and a goat is killed for the mother and the other women. No man is allowed in the hut until three or four days have elapsed. The father of the child does not eat or sleep again in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go to cultivate for about nine days after the birth.

If a woman has had two children and they have both died, she will upon the birth of the third child take it out of the village on a basket-work tray and place it in the road; an old woman who has had a hint of this will go and pick it up and take it to her house, then the father of the child goes and buys it back for a goat; having recovered it the father bores the lobe of its right ear and inserts a small earring of brass wire. If the child is a boy it is henceforward called Owiti and if a girl it is called Awiti, meaning the child that has been thrown away. The old woman who picked up the child is afterwards called mother in addition to the real mother.

Twins are considered lucky, but the infants and their parents have to stay in seclusion in their hut for a whole month. Women neighbours may enter the hut but men may not. The twin born first is called Apio (the one who comes quickly). The twin born second is called Adongo (the one who is delayed). The birth of twins is signalised by dances which extend over a whole month; they are apparently of a somewhat obscene character.

Marriage customs.—Girls are espoused [illegible] the age of seven, and they often go to their husband's house at the age of ten or eleven. The suitor commences by making small payments to the father of the girl every month or two. When the man has paid say one cow and twenty sheep he takes the girl to his house.

The unmarried girls of the village take the bride to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat and a quantity of *tembe* previous to the man's village by way of providing a wedding feast. If the man's

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was regarded as a juvenile. The homestead was supervised by the levir of his father's second wife. The young man desperately wanted to marry. His stepmother, however, had spread the rumor that he had had syphilis. Therefore none of the eligible girls would have him. He went to a medical dispensary off and on for several months but treatment was not successful. 762 159

While he was away, a half brother, the son of the senior living wife of the village, married without his knowledge. The young man obviously had been under intense emotional strain caused by the rumors and gossip associated with the fact that he had a venereal disease. He was the senior son by Luo customary law and on marriage would be the head of the village. His half brother had taken a wife. This added to the humiliation and shame and would bring ridicule upon him whenever he met with his contemporaries for the rest of his life. This was too much. He went to the *thim*, the no man's land surrounding his clan grazing area and the place where the ancestors are normally placated, and there hanged himself from a tree. [626]

His brothers and relatives were concerned about his absence and suspected what he had done. He was found by one of them after many days and his family and minimal lineage group completely destroyed the tree, including the roots, and there on the spot buried him and performed his funeral rites. The family was cleansed by the *jabilo* and the ancestors placated to receive his spirit by the sacrifice of a white cockerel and a black sheep. [783]

The first son to be born to his brother's marriage was named after him to placate his spirit and to continue his name in the lineage genealogies.

Naming a child for a relative who had died is used by the Joluo in many ways, but only after consultation with the *jabilo*. It is obvious therefore that any misfortune which occurred to the family or to the lineage segment after this suicide was attributed to it. The fact that the first child born after the suicide 762 553

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762
553 was given his name reveals their attempt to avoid the consequences of his act.

762 The second case arises from a breach of customary law which
159 in the old days would have meant banishment but which today
684 brings social ostracism.
[178]

Suicide Case No. 2.

The suicide was caught in the act of intercourse with his full brother's wife. The Luo believe that such an act involving members of the same *Jokinuio* (that is, those descended from the same mother or grandmother) brings *chiew* to the whole clan. The security and solidarity of family relationships are [578] threatened by the act because it involves quarrels which may lead to violence within the primary segment of the clan. In this case the brother did not tell the elders of the clan but merely threatened to do so. The guilty man returned to his own homestead and hanged himself in his hut. The house was destroyed [783] and members of the extended family were cleansed by the *jabilo*. The cleansing ceremony took the same form as in the first case, with the addition that the village was sprinkled with medicine in order that it might continue to be used by the dead man's family.

In the next case there are two clear motives which led to the suicide. The first, perhaps the most important, lies in indigenous beliefs and attitudes, while the second lies in more modern attitudes.

Suicide Case No. 3.

159 This Luo was about 30 years old and had been employed as
762 a driver for the Government for many years. Drivers in Kenya
556 receive a relatively high salary, and in addition some take advantage of their position and make extra money by illegally
[661] charging people for transportation. Through these activities, he became a relatively rich man and was able to marry a total of five wives at his comparatively young age. He was also wealthy